INVESTIGATION OF PROPOSED AIR FORCE PROCUREMENT RFP 33-600-52-5206 FOR PROCUREMENT OF 20,156 DE LUXE TYPIST CHAIRS

PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF

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INVESTIGATION OF PROPOSED AIR FORCE PROCUREMENT RFP 33-600-52-5206 FOR PROCUREMENT OF 20,156 DE LUXE TYPIST CHAIRS

A constituent of Hon. Frazier Reams, Member of Congress from the State of Ohio, presented him with an Air Force procurement invitation No. RFP 33-600-52-5206 under which it was proposed to purchase 20,156 typist chairs. The Congressman transmitted the invitation with the comments of his constituent to the Armed Services Committee of the House, where it was promptly referred to the Procurement Subcommittee for investigation and report.

That committee has investigated and reports as follows:

On December 6, 1951, after having examined the facts we wrote the Air Force Matériel Command at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, stating that our investigation showed that a saving of over $200,000 (at least $10 per chair) could be effected on this single purchase by using General Services Administration standard steel tubular chair specification No. 793; and we enclosed all the information on this specification.

The subcommittee requested to be advised why it was necessary to purchase 20,156 super de luxe executive-type typist chairs.

This letter was acknowledged on December 11, 1951, stating that—

> This matter is being looked into and as soon as the information is available—

and that we, the subcommittee, would be further advised. On January 8, 1952, we were advised:

> A delay in our reply has been occasioned by the necessity of making additional studies [sic] concerning this furniture. It is expected that this research [sic] will be completed in about 10 days, at which time a final reply will be made to you.

But the subcommittee was not satisfied and directed telephone calls to responsible officers at Wright-Patterson Field. Then it received a letter dated January 21, 1952, which arrived 1 week later, which is herewith reproduced.

HEADQUARTERS, AIR MATÉRIEL COMMAND,
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL,
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE,
Dayton, Ohio, January 21, 1952.

Hon. F. EDWARD HÉBERT,
Chairman, Procurement Subcommittee, Committee of Armed Services,
House on Representatives, Washington 25, D. C.

DEAR MR. HÉBERT: This is in further reply to your letter of December 6, 1951, regarding procurement of typist chairs.

It has been our practice in the procurement of typist chairs to request bids on items classified by the United States Air Force as "standard." In this particular case, GSA specification No. 791 was listed as "standard" because of its safety and durability aspects.

The laboratories at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (Wright Air Development Center) have been conducting additional investigations on certain typist chairs of the type covered by GSA specification No. 793. It has been ascertained that some of the chairs manufactured under this specification have been improved in

quality to such a point that it may be advisable to classify these chairs as "standard." They are also examining chairs of the type covered by GSA specification No. 791 to determine under what conditions the procurement of this chair will represent a definite economy to the Government because of its durability and longer useful life. At this time these tests have not been completed.

In the meantime, action has been suspended on the procurement of chairs covered by item 6 of RFP 33-600-52 5206.

When these tests are completed and a final determination has been made, you will be advised further as to our decision.

Sincerely,

W. D. ECKERT,
Major General, United States Air Force,
Acting Assistant Deputy Commanding General.

This letter exhibits, in simple language, a determined effort of the Air Force to squander $200,000. The subcommittee has pointed out that at least that sum will be involved in needless spending; and in making that positive statement the subcommittee assumes that 20,156 chairs are needed in the Air Force in the immediate future.

The chair which General Services Administration purchases for all the Government offices, Army, Navy, and Air Force here in Washington, D. C., is the standard steel tubular chair, specification No. 793. It has purchased 25,000 of them in the past year and a half for use in Washington, D. C. Certainly, that number shows the chair is not in the experimental stage and has been fairly well "researched."

But that isn't good enough for the Air Force.

On the other hand, only 130 of the super de luxe model No. 791 which the Air Force proposes to purchase were bought for use in Washington. Yet the Air Force is busy testing its "safety and durability" for purchase of 20,156.

It is a sad commentary when the Air Force cannot avail itself of proven Government standards; and why it cannot reexamine itself on the quantities needed. That subject will interest the subcommittee further.

After more than 60 days, we are thus advised:

when these tests are completed and final determination has been made, you [meaning this subcommittee] will be advised further as to our decision [sic].

If the general in charge of procurement had asked the latest price on the super deluxe job No. 791, he would have found it exceeded $28.80 per chair when the last 130 were purchased; and that the standard model No. 793 with which all the rest of the general run of Government employees are supplied, including Army, Navy, and Marine Corps and all the other branches, can be purchased from $16.80 to $18. This is a saving of at least $10 per chair or over $200,000 on this purchase alone. The time consumed in attempting to answer our letters would have been more profitably employed in doing a simple job in arithmetic to save $200,000 for the harried American taxpayer.

1. We recommend immediate cancellation of RFP 33-600-52-5206.

2. The subcommittee recommends that the Air Force use its personnel for testing aircraft for the defense of this Nation and leave the testing of chairs to the General Services Administration, which is an agent of the Government for that purpose.

3. A thorough review of all Air Force procurement invitations is in order.

This wanton, and willful waste of time, money, and critical materials must stop, and stop at once.

F. EDWARD HÉBERT, Louisiana, *Chairman.*
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Approved: February 4, 1952.

CARL VINSON, *Chairman.*

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